(c) the impact of this arrangement on the shipping industry; and

(d) the steps taken or proposed to be taken to face the situation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING (SHRI SHRIPAD YESSO NAIK): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir, Currently Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) is the nodal agency for crude purchase and Shipping Corporation of India (SCI) is the nodal agency for crude transportation. After dismantling of Administrative Price Mechanism (APM) from 1st April, 2002, individual oil public sector companies such as Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd., Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd., and Indian Oil Corporation are to make their own arrangements for sourcing / transportation of crude oil.

(c) and (d) The impact of dismantling of APM can not be assessed, as of now, with a fair degree of accuracy. The Government has already approved the SCI's plan to enter into Contract of Affreightment (COA) with Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd., and Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd. for the year 2002-03 for transportation of crude oil. Further the Government policy of buying on FOB (Free on Board) basis with preference to Indian vessels continues.

Transport corridor between Asia and Europe

3588. SHRI NANA DESHMUKH: Will the Minister of SHIPPING be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have signed a deal in Russia for opening a new transport corridor *via* Iran between Asia and Europe;

(b) whether the proposed corridor would save time and transport cost;

(c) if so, the quantum thereof; and

(d) by when such an Asia transport bridge is likely to take shape?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING (SHRI SHRIPAD YESSO NAIK): (a) Yes, Sir. An Inter-Governmental Agreement on International North-South Transport Corridor has been signed amongst India, Russia and Iran.

(b) and (c) There will be substantial saving in time and cost of transportation of goods by virtue of utilization of the transport corridor from ports of India to Moscow passing through Iran and Caspian Sea. As per the preliminary indications, this corridor can facilitate about 20% reduction in delivery time and transportation cost.

(d) This agreement will come into force with its ratification by the three countries. Implementation of the provisions of this agreement and the operationalisation of the transport corridor route will begin to take shape

when the Coordination Council, which is the executive body to facilitate the implementation of the agreement, will be constituted and commences its functioning as provided in the agreement.

Setting-up of Inland Waterways Transport Development Council

3589. SHRI RAMA MUNI REDDY SIRIGIREDDY: Will the Minister of SHIPPING be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Inland Water Transport Development Council for the Development of inland waterways transport has been set-up;

(b) if so, when the Council was set-up and what are the terms of reference of the Council;

(c) whether it is a fact that in the month of August, 2001 the Council held its first meeting; and

(d) if so, the outcome of the meeting?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING (SHRI SHRIPAD YESSO NAIK): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) An Inland Water Transport Development Council, under the Chairmanship of Minister of Shipping, was set-up on 14.5.2001, with the following terms of references:—

(i) To monitor the status/progress of overall development of waterways and improvement in the share of IWT in cargo and passenger involvement.

(ii) To assess the future, coordinate development of waterways in the country.

(iii) To review the policy framework and recommend changes/ modifications.

(iv) To examine requirement of funds for IWT development and recommend facilitative steps.

(v) To recommend measures for steady development of IWT as an integrated component of multimodal transport.

(vi) Any other issue relating to development of IWT, which is of common interest for the Center and the States.

(c) and (d) Yes, Sir. The first meeting of Inland Water Development Council was held on 25.8.2001 at New Delhi. As regards outcome of the meeting, following recommendations were made by the Council:—